



# CFC LINK

**EASTER EDITION, 2020**

Divine Word Missionaries  
Common Formation Centre, Nairobi, Kenya

## *Inside this Edition*

- Faith Amid COVID-19 Pandemic



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*CFC Link, Easter Edition 2020*



### FROM THE EDITORIAL DESK

**E**aster is the celebration of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the death. It is the fulfilled prophecy of the Messiah who would be persecuted, died for our sins, and rise on the third day (Isaiah 53). Easter precedes a period of Lent; a time set aside for prayer, fasting, works of charity and repentance. Lent begins on Ash Wednesday and ends on Good Friday, the day of Jesus' crucifixion. This forty-day period is in reference to the forty days pattern of Israel, Moses, Elijah and Jesus' time in the wilderness.

Easter is a very significant feast within Christianity and it is the foundation of the Christian faith. The death of Jesus Christ has given the gift of eternal life to all humanity. Thus, Easter renews our daily hope.

The CFC Link Editorial wish to express our deepest heart-felt gratitude to the Almighty God for bestowing his immeasurable grace on us and enabling us to come out with this Easter Edition. We are also in no less measure grateful to all our cherished patrons for their invaluable support over the years.

With the unfortunate COVID-19 pandemic, we can understand how some of us are scared and uncertain of what tomorrow holds. These are indeed difficult times for our world and the Church. However, the Catholic Church remains resolute, firm, united and hopeful in the face of this pandemic that has shaken our most important Lenten season and threatens what is probably the most crucial moment on our calendar, Easter – the Resurrection of our Lord.

We wish to encourage you to celebrate this year's Easter festivity solemnly and spiritually even as we remain locked up in our homes. We urge you to remain calm, do not be afraid, spread love and not fear, remember that our Lord Jesus Christ, by His blood on the Cross has marked us for salvation and not damnation. Let us maintain universal safety protocols as announced by our respective countries and health authorities so as to keep well. We are constantly praying for you and the world for things to return to normalcy. This too shall pass!

***We wish you a spirit-filled Easter celebration.***





Fr. James Mailady, SVD



## Easter Message from the RECTOR'S DESK

**A** weeping woman is seen around an empty tomb. She is wondering as to what happened to the body of the one, she loved. It looks like she is in shock, confused and broken hearted. Suddenly an angel appears and briefs her about what has happened. The angel asks her to remember! Then she remembers- yes, she remembers everything. Memories floods her mind. She couldn't wait. She runs back at once to town. To tell others what she has seen and heard. A mourner becomes a missionary. It is the Easter morning...

Evangelization, said my professor, is like a *beggar telling another beggar where he got the bread!* I believe, today more than ever we need witnesses and testimonies. Preachers will be phased out soon. People are looking for

authentic witnesses, men and women of integrity who can show Jesus is alive in their hearts, in their lives. Mary Magdalene had a very personal experience of the Risen Jesus. She did not keep it to herself. She was compelled by the love of Christ to share that experience with others. Easter is the most important feast of our faith; it gives us hope. The resurrection experience transforms Jesus' disciples. The men who had lost all hope and ran away after the crucifixion became bold witnesses of the resurrection. They were ready and willing to lay down their very lives for Him. The resurrection of Jesus is an invitation to bring about a real transformation in and around us. Yes, we are invited to be catalyst of transformation in our society.

Jesus is innocent. He did no wrong. People in power portray him as a threat to the society, to their religion. The masses were incited and brain-washed. Jesus is labelled as a criminal. Based on gender, race, class and color the criminalization of the innocent is rampant in our society even today. There aren't many to stand up and speak for the voiceless and the marginalized of today. People are frightened to speak up. We need a personal resurrection experience to be bold, to be courageous like Mary Magdalene and the disciples.

May this Easter transform our attitudes and lives. May it renew our hopes. May the risen Lord fill your life with His love and joy. Happy Easter to you.

**Fr. James Mailady, SVD.**

# Integrity Of Creation

*“Oh, all you works of the Lord oh bless the Lord,  
to him be highest glory and praise forever.”  
(Dan 3:57)*

By Frt. Emmanuel Faakang, SVD

The first account of creation tells us that, after God had created everything he looked at the works of his hands and said, **“It was very good”** (Gen 1:31). Hence, the goodness of nature was testified by the maker of the heavens and the earth – God himself. Man, who is therefore created in the image and likeness of God has no option but to be good stewards of all creation. In Gen 1:28, God gave man the first and most sublime responsibility. Man is given the task to have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth. With this imperative, man has a divine obligation to take care of nature.



It is therefore not out of place that we the Divine Word Missionaries (SVD) have as part of our characteristic dimensions the aspect of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation. In the light of this, we in the Common Formation Centre (CFC) here in Nairobi are playing our active role in this dimension. With the able leadership of our Rector- Fr James Mailady, we have planted over 225 trees quite recently and are carefully nurturing their growth. There is the constant beautification of our environment with the periodic trimming of trees to keep them in shape, mowing of lawns, planting and watering of flowers and gardens amongst

others. All these and other activities make our CFC not just a formation house but a real beautiful home and the most preferred place to be. CFC Nairobi has a very serene environment adored by all who enter the compound.

Pope Francis in his encyclical **“Laudato Si”** reminds not only the church but all humanity to re-look at how we are causing damage to the environment and see how best we can protect nature. It is therefore a wake-up call to all of us especially priests, religious and even young men and women in formation to champion this worthy course.

There is a popular American native proverb which says, **“Wait until the last tree is cut, the last fish is eaten and the last river is destroyed, then you will see that you can't eat money.”** As the Psalmist says in Psalm 96:12, **“Let the field exult and everything in it. Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy,”** so also shall all the trees in the CFC Nairobi together with all of us sing for joy for the good and beauty of creation.



# THE PRIESTHOOD OF THE LAY FAITHFUL AND THE MINISTERIAL PRIESTHOOD



In two New Testament writings it is explicitly stated that priesthood is shared in common by the entire Christian people (cf. Rev. 1:6; 5:10; 20:6; 1Pet. 2:5, 9). By this many people tend to assert that there is no difference between the common priesthood and ministerial priesthood.

The two forms of priesthood are both instituted by Christ but they are different in essence and degree. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that they are interrelated. The ministerial priesthood is at the service of the universal priesthood of all the baptized so that they "can offer themselves as a living, holy and acceptable host to God" (Romans 12:1). Pertaining their difference, let us look at the calling of the Twelve and their mission (Luke 9:1-6). They were given authority which empowers them to proclaim the Gospel, celebrate the Eucharist, forgive sins and lead the community. They were to be servants and their work was ministry. Their ministry was not to be regarded as one of many, they were to shepherd and the mission of the shepherd is indispensable for the life and development of the community. In fact, they were empowered to act in the name of Christ.

The mission of the Twelve as explained above is the mission of the ministerial priesthood. The universal priesthood on the other hand is primarily for the worship in spirit and truth with the offerings of spiritual sacrifices. This role takes on a fundamental importance in Christian existence but it is not accompanied by the authority of the

shepherd, nor that which was conferred on the Twelve, nor does it entail a pastoral mission. Moreover, the difference between the two is evident in their way of life. Jesus tells the Twelve to renounce everything in order to follow him. By calling them to relinquish everything (family, worldly possession, pursuit of profession), he establishes a form of consecrated life not required of those who are called only to believe in and cling to the Church. This detachment is the foundation of the priestly consecration which is manifested in the celibate form of life, in evangelical poverty and the renunciation of secular profession. This makes it evident that the difference between the universal and ministerial priesthood is a radical one with regard to their mission and consecration.

In conclusion, the ministerial priesthood is different from the universal priesthood because it carries a unique powerful grace and mission for the good of the people of God but it does not make the priest a better person than others.



**Fr. Joshua Munterim, SVD**

# Mission

## AS A PERSONAL RADIATION OF JESUS

***“Follow Me and I will make you fishers of men” (Matthew 4:19) are the words of Jesus to his early disciples.***

*In these words, we hear Jesus throwing to the man invitation for a mission.*

*We can as well see a command embedded in this invitation.*

*Therefore, without resistance or delay but with much urgency, they left everything and followed Him immediately.*

*(cf. Mark 1:20)*



through prayer is necessary for us to draw close to him. Talking primarily with God the Father, but also with Jesus, helps us understand their will. It aids in conforming one's life to that of Christ. One thing we should always remember is that our interaction with God makes a lot of difference in our lives. Occasional fasting can also bring us closer to God and reshape our priorities to be more in line with his will. It can help us gain a bigger picture of what is truly important in life. The Bible is God's map that leads us to salvation through Christ. Bible study is an important adventure a Christian should make. For this is the only way to know the plan of God for us and what is expected of us. Meditation is the act of focusing our minds to think deeply about how God's Word applies to our lives. It is one way we can digest what the Bible teaches and further our pursuit of becoming more like Jesus.

Jesus came to reveal to us God the Father and to establish His Kingdom through the Paschal Mystery. As followers of him, we ought to imitate him in this regard through welcoming all, especially the poor, sinners and not to be representatives of the law and morality but of mercy.



By **Fr. Dogbatse Michael, SVD.**

The main purpose for this call is the project of Jesus and this will only be achieved when the disciple become what he is called to be. When he fully evolved into the mystery of Christ and come to understand both the “identity” and the “way” of Jesus. To be this remarkable disciple, we ought to be with Jesus and learn from him before he sends us out. The aim of this sending out is going out in his name, saying what he will say and doing what he will do and to bring people into communion with God.

How then can one be with Jesus today? Stating how to be with and become more like Jesus is straightforward; putting what God says into practice, through prayer, Bible study, fasting, and meditation.

Prayer is the foundation on which a healthy, strong, and growing relationship with God and Jesus is built. Just as communication is essential to human relationships, communing with our Father



# *My OTP Experience In Brazil*



Brazil is a big country. It is usually said that it is a continent on its own, as it is the largest country in Latin America with 26 states. It is rich in culture and resources as well as with many races of people from all over the world due to its rich and interesting historical formation. The Divine Word Missionaries (SVD) have three provinces and one region: Brazil North (BRN), Brazil South (BRS) Brazil Central (BRC) and Brazil Amazon Region (BRA).

I did my Oversea Training Program (OTP) in Brazil North Province (BRN), from September 2017 to July 2019. The experience was very enriching for my vocation journey and growth as a religious missionary. Initially, life was challenging, especially for the first three months of adapting to a different environment, culture, and language. The experience can be divided into two main parts: language learning and pastoral exposure in a parish.

Learning the Portuguese language with cultural orientation in the city of Belo-Horizonte (Good-horizon) lasted for 9 months. This was followed by one-month holiday in the North-East region of Brazil, during which I participated in a door to door evangelization, organized by SVD in collaboration with their lay partners. During this time, we were hosted by some families. It was a good opportunity to practice the

language and immerse myself in the culture of the Brazilian people. The exercise deepened my understanding of the Catholic faith in the Brazilian context. Besides, frequent interactions with both the native and non-native speakers of Portuguese during different occasions and activities accelerated my comprehension of the language and culture.

On 8th August 2018, I officially started my pastoral exposure in Paróquia Sagrado Coração de Jesus (Sacred Heart of Jesus parish) located in a small



town called Barra Mansa in the state of Rio de Janeiro with 13 communities (out stations).

Basically, I participated in almost all the activities of the parish and the communities. This includes celebration of the liturgy of the word, giving reflections at Mass, participating in meetings such as parish council meetings, and district meetings. Also, I participated in different parish apostolates like; youth apostolate, social apostolate (serving the poor and needy by distributing basic needs like food and cloth), visiting the sick in hospitals and homes, teaching catechism as well

as serving as an acolyte during liturgical celebrations.

However, OTP was a challenging moment of learning and unlearning. I had to adapt to a new way of life, language and culture. I experienced some cultural shocks, criticisms, misunderstanding and misinterpretation of things. In the midst of these, I enjoyed the food such as rice and beans, roasted meat (churrasco), and cassava among others. I also witnessed cultural celebrations like carnival, music and dance (samba, forró, sertaneja).

From my personal experience, for one to be able to go through this mind opening experience successfully, one needs prayer, humility, tolerance, patience, attentiveness

and hard work.

In conclusion, Oversea Training Program opened me up to the mission realities outside the African context. It also improved my personal skills in organizing and planning as I had to plan programs for some small Christian communities. I must say that I enjoyed my experience in the Brazil North Province (BRN). It is a good place for OTP experience as well as mission.

**By Frt. Sambaya, Pamphil Colman Kibee, SVD**



**T**oday, it is difficult to define the poor. We talk about the poor in many different contexts. We can refer to the poor as people who are defenseless in the face of suffering, the voiceless who left without solution in the face of life-threatening situations. For instance, hunger streetism, unemployment, war, displacement, etc. render people poor. However, poverty is not only limited to material things but also extends to the spiritual aspect.

Pope John Paul II, in his various journeys across the world never ceased to encourage people of good will to respect the rights and dignity of the poor. In this perspective, any little charitable gesture that we show towards the poor becomes a sign of God's presence; "Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me" (Mt 25:40). Sharing with the poor is an infallible criterion of evangelical charity. We must learn good lessons from Jesus' teaching in the parable of the rich man and the poor man called Lazarus (Lk. 16, 19-31). In my humble opinion, the rich man was condemned and excluded from the Kingdom because of his indifference. I was really struck by what a parishioner shared with me during the past Christmas festivities which reiterated that "the greatest pain of the poor is that no one needs their friendship".

It is not always a question of giving or doing something for the poor, but doing it with them, living with them and sharing their friendship. Because according to Mother Teresa, the most important thing is not the gifts we give to the poor whatever the quantity, but the dose of love we put into them. This is to say that sometimes we may have good intentions of helping the poor but the way it is done can be humiliating, demeaning and dehumanizing. The poor do not only need material gifts, but also require from us the expression of love, a listening ear in order to commune and to fraternize with them.

Earthly goods are gifts from God, hence should be for the common good. Therefore, we should not live only on what we have, but also on who we are in relation to all humanity.

**By Frt. Junior Kalunda, SVD.**

## **MASTER "KNOW TOO MUCH"**

This is "master know too much"  
The man who knows everything in this world  
He knows the history of everything  
He hears stories from every corner of the world  
And interprets them the way he likes  
He is an advisor and philosopher everywhere  
He has answers to all questions  
Ask him one question and he will produce a dozen answers  
A great talker, a bold liar.

Wonderful "master know too much"  
He has keys for all solutions  
But has no key to solve his own problems  
He knows everybody  
The best friend of all strangers  
Master "know too much" the best critic  
Who criticizes and opposes everything;  
except his views  
The winner of all arguments  
Who claims to be the wisest of all men  
Oh "master know too much!" Enough is enough!



**By: EMMANUEL FAKANG, SVD**

## FAITH AMID CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC:

*Lockdown, but not locked down; quarantined, but not deprived.*

The response of one of the Catholic youths who I journey with in faith is quite illuminating. I asked: what is your feeling concerning the closure of the Church as necessitated by the COVID 19 pandemic? He responded: "Brother, the Church is not closed. People are only asked to stay at home, the Church is the people". Inherent in this young man's response is an expression of deep faith. It teaches us that faith in God still triumphs even in the face of this pandemic. It is not a time to question faith but rather a time to rediscover and strengthen genuine and mature faith in God. It is possibly a time to demonstrate that faith and reason are not antagonists but rather the rightful marriage between faith and reason gives birth to a tangible lasting solution. This is exactly what I intend in this article; that faith cannot be locked down. Though there may be lockdown and closure of the church (building) which of course is necessitated by reason, faith is not locked down. Though the human person may be quarantined which again is necessitated by reason, the faith of the person is not deprived.

Moreover, the church (building) is unquestionably indispensable because God himself so requires it (1 Kings 6:11-14), as well as meeting together to worship and celebrate the Eucharist (the source and summit of our faith). However, in my opinion, this difficult moment caused by the pandemic can be turned into a positive moment. I think it offers us an opportunity in our lockdown to deepen our personal relationship with God as Christians. It may be an opportune moment to spend quality time in prayer; to read and meditate on God's Word. It may also be a time for a deep spiritual union with God. The Pastors of the Church are relentlessly employing various means possible to help us commune with God. Let us embrace those means.

Furthermore, it is time to reflect deeply on the words of Jesus Christ to the Samaritan woman at the well: "But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for such the Father seeks to worship him" (John 4:23). For the Samaritans, the place for



**Simon Vire, SVD**

authentic worship was on the mount of Gerizim, while for the Jews the only place of worship was the temple in Jerusalem. This accounts for the reason why when the temple of Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 AD the faith of the Jews suffered a terrible setback. It is worth noting that Jesus himself went to the temple and even affirms it as "...a house of prayer" (cf. Luke 2:46, Matthew 21:12ff, John 2:13-16).

However, he seeks us to focus on him and develop a personal relationship with him. It is my prayer that as we pass through this difficult time, we may have a personal encounter with Jesus Christ. May your faith not crush during this period but rather grow deeper in your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

**SHALOM!**

## CFC GETS NEW MINISTERS



The SVD Common Formation Center (CFC) in Nairobi instituted eleven fraters into the offices of Lector and Acolyte by the Vice Provincial Fr Justus Ruttock, SVD on the 29<sup>th</sup> of January 2020 at the CFC chapel.

The Lectors are Rolland Andriamampionona, Miracle Ramson

Torsu, Andre Yasmick Katunga, Joue Tovonoely, Michael Dogbatse and Adrian Mutandwa and the Acolytes are Pierre Damien Rambeloarison, Gilchrist Roi Adigo, Emmanuel Faakang, Blaise Ofoe Mankwa and Joshua Munterim.

On that same day, five fraters were also accepted to begin their second Novitiate in preparation for their final vows. They are Simon Vire, Pamphil Colman Sambaya, Jean Claude Radriamanana, Roger Issere Agre and Justin Kolman Gbejeha with Fr. William Odeke Owire, SVD who has been entrusted with the role of the Novice Master to direct them towards their final commitment.



## NEW EQUALS BETTER



**Frt. Adrian Mutandwa, SVD**

I am not particularly interested in trends and trendsetting. My problem with the modern understanding of trends is how it is connected to newness. In the world today, many people believe that new equals better and perhaps there

is an adage, *"the newer the better"*. This is not all that true or cross cutting as factual. One can think of many things that actually become better with age. Take wisdom for example, the older it is, the better. Sometimes, we simply buy into the marketing gimmick of, latest and newer is better. With mobile phones and other technologies this could be true. However, looking at a wide range of factors, the whole aspect of better can be questioned. An example would be the fact that many people only use a part of the different functions offered by their mobile devices and yet still want a latest device that claims to offer more.

Pause!! and think about it. Put simply, many times we buy into hype and think we bought into better. This issue extends to academic trends, pastoral approaches, methodologies, theological methods and different religious practises. Sadly sometimes, many times actually, the old is dismissed as irrelevant simply because it is old, and the new is picked as relevant based on its newness. All I am saying is, newness and latestness are not sufficient criteria for determining relevance and importance of anything. In actual fact, they are complementary and secondary to decision making in choices of anything.

## HINTS FOR HAPPINESS

Once I asked my pupils: who attended Easter vigil Mass? Few of them raised hands, and I continued, who then celebrated Easter on Sunday? The number increased. Finally, I asked: who went to celebrate Easter Monday? All of them raised up their hands. We all have different ways of acquiring happiness. We have got different ways of doing things, but whatever we intend to do should bring about positive outcome; first to ourselves then to our neighbours. Happiness is the most common aspect in our lives that people are pursuing. We try our best to be happy, but being happy does not mean that one has no problems, trials or burdens, but we endeavour to be happy in order to lessen all these. Though challenges will come our way, they should not take away our happiness.

The forty-day journey (Lent) is quite long for us Christians, as we experience a kind of detachment. It is not a moment of mourning, rather a period of reflection. We strive to discard all that tamps our happiness. The Christian life is made up of both bright moments and dark moments. The moments may drive us to think that life has no meaning. Yet, the bright moments will come when we shall rejoice. Finally, happiness is not about what we want all the time, it is about being content with what we have. It is also about being grateful for who we are and what we have. However, we may not attain an absolute happiness here on earth since we are insatiable beings such that nothing can gratify our will. So be happy not because everything is good but because we can see something good in everything or situation. "Everyone wants happiness, no one wants pain yet you cannot have a rainbow without a little rain".

May the joy of Easter be with each one of us.

**By Frt. Hery Joue, SVD.**



# Gallery



Community at Mass



Fraters playing Volleyball



CFC Community



Palm Sunday Procession



Fraters playing Football



Fraters with the Maasai



Adoration



Fraters Cooking



At Mass

## Some Self-Reliant Projects



